
Keeping Faith with Culture: Protestant Mission Among Zoroastrians of Bombay in the Nineteenth Century

Farshid Namdaran

The history of Protestant missionary activity among Zoroastrians has proved to be a relatively rich field, despite the small size of the worldwide Zoroastrian community, which in 1900 numbered 93,000 in India, the focus of this article, and 108,500 worldwide.¹ Protestant missions to this community began mainly in India in the nineteenth century, and in Iran only in the twentieth century.² Converts were few, but some made definite contributions to church life in India. Caught as they were between different cultures and religions, these Indian Zoroastrian converts struggled to forge a synthesis between two cultures and two religions, ultimately allowing their faith to embrace their culture. The cultural distance they sought to span is reflected in the diverse work of two missionary theologians of the period, John Wilson (1804–75) and Greek scholar James Hope Moulton (1863–1917), whose writings will be discussed briefly.³

Zoroastrians are the followers of Zoroaster, who flourished probably in the sixth century before Christ but about whom historians know little with certainty.⁴ The religion was prominent in Persia and the Middle East until the fall of the last Persian empire in the seventh century A.D., following the Arab invasion. Some Zoroastrians fled to India and continued to preserve their culture and religion, mainly in western India, where they became known as Parsis (also spelled Parsees). Within Persia itself Muslim persecution diminished their numbers until only very small groups of Zoroastrians, known as Gebri, remained in the remote towns of Yezd and Kerman.

The Zoroastrian sacred book, the Avesta, is a collection of writings, the most ancient of which is the Gathas, seventeen hymns traditionally ascribed to Zoroaster himself.⁵ The Frenchman Anquetil du Perron was the first to translate it into a European language (1771).⁶ John Wilson, in the early nineteenth century, was the first Protestant missionary to deliberately set out to learn and write about the Parsi religion.⁷ The book he wrote on the subject (1843) was unfortunately based mainly on the Avestan book of Vendidad, whereas later scholars showed that the most authentic teachings of Zoroaster are in the Gathas.

Protestant Missions to Zoroastrians

The earliest recorded attempt, originating in northern Germany, at an organized mission to the Zoroastrians was by a small community of Moravians. In 1747 they commissioned two doctors to go to Yezd in Persia, where they had heard the Gebri lived.⁸ The mission was an utter failure, for the two doctors never reached their destination.

A little-known Armenian itinerant missionary named Carapet Aratoon, who was trained in Serampore and sent across the subcontinent to Bombay in 1810, was probably the first missionary to encounter Zoroastrians in any number.⁹ He worked and preached in the streets and bazaars of Bombay until 1820. His journals are filled with accounts of his encounters with Parsis and the many inquirers he had among them, although he did not record any conversions.

The first missionary who had any success in converting Zoroastrians to Christianity was the Scotsman John Wilson.¹⁰ Sent by the Scottish Missionary Society to Bombay in 1830, Wilson adopted the deliberately confrontational strategy that was popular at that time.¹¹ Wilson's work and writings on Parsis and their religion helped establish his reputation as a leading orientalist of his day. He continued his work with the Zoroastrians of India until his death in 1875. No other missionary surpassed him in terms of winning converts from Zoroastrianism to Christianity.

Not until the last decade of the nineteenth century did a major missionary society such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS) send missionaries specifically to the Zoroastrians. In 1895 Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Arthur Freeman volunteered his services to the society and was sent to Bombay "to conduct a mission amongst the educated natives especially the Parsis."¹² He conducted a vigorous though brief mission among the Parsis with the aid of Rostamji Mistry, a Parsi convert. Freeman died in 1900, and Mistry resigned in the same year.

Another attempt by five female volunteers under the auspices of the CMS is also recorded. In 1896 they were commissioned "to form a missionary settlement of lady volunteers in order to work amongst the Parsee ladies."¹³ The Parsi community reacted sharply to this attempt, with hostile articles appearing in Parsi-controlled newspapers warning the community of such a move.¹⁴ I have discovered no official reports or papers that indicate what happened to this effort.

Farshid Namdaran, a retired medical doctor of Persian descent residing in the United Kingdom, is a convert from Zoroastrianism. His M.Th., by research, obtained from the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, School of Divinity (New College), University of Edinburgh, was on Christian mission to Zoroastrians.

Apparently the final attempt to reach the Parsis was the commissioning of James Hope Moulton by the council of the YMCA of India to work and lecture among the Parsi community in Bombay for one year in 1915.¹⁵ It seems that this was the last organized effort by a missionary organization to evangelize the Zoroastrians until the end of the First World War.

Five Converts

For the period 1839–1900 I have found evidence of fifteen Parsis from Bombay or nearby cities who converted to Christianity and were baptized. A first group of conversions occurred in 1839–59 under Wilson and the Scottish Presbyterians and a second group under the Anglicans in the 1890s. Some relevant details of these baptisms appear in the accompanying table.

Though the total number of converts is small, the proportion that eventually was ordained (six out of fifteen) is high. It seems remarkable that a comparatively small community of Parsis should produce such a number of high-caliber converts. Their contribution to the activities of the mission in western India, including developing an indigenous church during the latter part of the nineteenth century, seems to have been significant. Sufficient material exists to give a brief account of the lives of five of the converts who were ordained.¹⁶

Dhanjibhai Nauroji. Coming from a wealthy, influential Parsi family of Bombay, Nauroji entered a missionary school as a teenager. He was converted and then baptized in 1839, the first Parsi convert to be baptized. This event caused a great stir and unrest within the Parsi community. Missionary Wilson had to appear in court and publicly defend his actions, and the missionary school suffered from the temporary withdrawal of all the Parsi and other pupils. Nauroji was disinherited and rejected by his family and became dependent on the missionary society for financial support.¹⁷

At his baptism, Nauroji read a personal declaration in which he rejected Zoroastrianism. In a letter to Wilson a few months later, he referred to it as Satan's religion. At least in this early stage of his Christian experience, Nauroji rejected the idea that Zoroastrianism contained any true representation of God or could serve as any preparation for Christianity.

Nauroji became a close companion of Wilson and, with the help of fellow convert Hormazdji Pestonji, revised the Gujarati

Bible and perhaps also helped in the publishing of Wilson's famous book on Parsi religion.¹⁸ Nauroji went to Scotland in 1843 to study at New College, Edinburgh, and was ordained by the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh. At this early stage he demonstrated his strong personality by insisting that unless he was ordained on terms of full equality with the missionaries, with full "evangelistic power and liberty," he would not enter the service of the Free Church of Scotland.¹⁹

On his return to Bombay in 1847, Nauroji chose Surat as his missionary field. He worked there with the Irish Presbyterian mission until 1857, when he was offered the post of minister of Ambroli Church in Bombay.²⁰ He worked for nearly forty years among the Parsis and other communities in that city.²¹ Two of his published sermons show how deeply committed he was to the cause of spreading the Gospel to all of India.²² In the late 1880s he was also employed as lecturer in Bible studies in the Free Church College, and in the 1890s he became the founding president of the Parsi Christian Association.²³ His standing in the Parsi community of Bombay increased with age, so much so that in 1896, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, many prominent community members attended the celebration. He became known as the Grand Father of Indian Christians and died at the age of eighty-six in 1908.

Nauroji married a Christian Indian woman, but little is known about her except that she helped him in his work. They had at least two daughters, who continued to be employed by the Free Church of Scotland in Bombay after their father's death. Nauroji's wife preceded him in death, probably in the early 1890s.

A letter Nauroji wrote shortly before his death, which shows clearly his changed attitude toward his former religion, exemplifies the sentiments of Christian Parsis of his time and no doubt those of more recent generations.²⁴ He wrote,

I was born a Parsi and am still a Parsi of the Parsis. With the exception of that which is of the highest importance to man, I mean, religious faith, I am one with my brethren according to flesh. Whatever touches them touches me. Their joy and sorrow are mine. I love them, and if need be, I am ready to lay down my life for them. . . . I am proud to belong to a race which stands foremost by reason of many high qualities among the races of the East. The love which I bear to my Parsi brethren leads me earnestly to desire that, in regard to higher matters also, they and I stood on the same platform, that we saw eye to eye and felt heart to heart in regard to the great things God has revealed to us for our spiritual and eternal welfare. I am confident that the time is coming when this desire shall be fulfilled, and though I may not live to see it, yet I rejoice in the anticipation of it.

He clearly affirms here his membership in the Parsi community and his recognition of the positive qualities of Parsi culture. He manifests inclusiveness in talking about the great things that God has revealed and looks forward to a time when Parsis will turn to Christ.

Sorabji Kherstedji. Like Nauroji, Sorabji came from a wealthy family and attended the mission school.²⁵ After his conversion and baptism in 1841, Sorabji's family rejected him, and he also became dependent on the missionaries financially.²⁶ Sorabji was sent out of Bombay to Ahmadabad, where he worked as an assistant

Parsi Converts to Christianity, 1839–1900

Name (* = ordained)	Date	Person Baptizing	Denomination	Place
Dhanjibhai Nauroji* (DN)	1839	J. Wilson	Presbyterian	Bombay
Hormazdji Pestonji*	1839	J. Wilson	Presbyterian	Bombay
Framji Bahmanji	1839	J. Wilson	Presbyterian	Bombay
Sorabji Kherstedji* (SK)	1841	G. Valentine	Anglican	Bombay
Nasserwanji	1848	DN	Presbyterian	Surat
S. Edulji	1855	J. Wilson	Presbyterian	Bombay
Ruttonji Nowroji*	1856	W. S. Price/SK	Anglican	Nasik
Behramji Kersasji	1856	J. Wilson	Presbyterian	Bombay
Merwanji	1859	J. Wilson/Glasgow	Presbyterian	Surat
Shapurji D. Bhabha*	?	?	Presbyterian	?
Rostamji Mistry* (RM)	1891	?	Anglican	Bombay
Dorabji Patell	1895	T. A. Freeman/RM	Anglican	Bombay
Meherbai Patell	1895	T. A. Freeman/RM	Anglican	Bombay
[unnamed]	1895	R. S. Heywood	Anglican	Poona
Dorabji H. P. Khandwalla	1896	T. A. Freeman/RM	Anglican	Bombay

catechist in a missionary station run by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1844 he returned to Bombay and worked under Bishop Carr, where he met missionaries Robert Nesbit and John Murray Mitchell. In 1853 he was employed by the CMS to work with William Salter Price in Nasik, principally helping Price to run the orphanage and later building the Christian settlement of Sharanpur, near Nasik.²⁷ In Nasik he met and married Franscina, the adopted daughter of Sir Francis Ford, commander of an English regiment. He raised his family in Nasik but in 1867 moved from there to take up a civil service position with the British government.²⁸ Nine years later he moved with his family to Poona, where his wife opened the Victoria High School. Bishop Johnson of Calcutta admitted him to deacon's orders at Agra in 1878, and for a while he worked in Junir as honorary missionary and later in Poona, where he also taught church history at the divinity school. He died in 1894.

No record remains of Sorabji's baptismal testimony or of early letters, and therefore it is difficult to say with certainty how he regarded Zoroastrianism at the time of his conversion, but his views were probably similar to those of Nauroji, for they came from a very similar environment and background. It is therefore very likely that Sorabji understood Zoroastrianism to be totally false and publicly rejected it, and in turn was rejected by the Parsi community.

In time, however, Sorabji, as did Nauroji, came to accept the Parsi community and to be accepted by them. Sorabji appears to have engaged in continuous dialogue with the Parsis, informally with family and friends, and formally with Parsi priests and the Panchayat.²⁹ The best documentation of this interaction is in a book by Sorabji's daughter Cornelia, in which she describes her father's attempt to engage in dialogue with Parsi priests. He published two books on Zoroaster and Christianity in this attempt. Cornelia's account documents the change in attitudes on both sides that must have taken place during his lifetime. She also refers frequently to the pride her father felt in being a Parsi and how he made sure that the children were brought up to regard themselves as Parsis (though not as Zoroastrians).³⁰

Sorabji's family composition was rather unusual, especially considering the strict class distinctions in Victorian Britain, as well as the rigid caste system in India. His marriage, which was unified by his and his wife's common faith, blended several cultures—on his side, Parsi, on Franscina's, Hindu; her adoptive parents were typically aristocratic English, and through the missionaries he adopted a Victorian middle-class culture. Judged by the children, the marriage was a success. One daughter, Cornelia, the first woman to study law at Oxford, became a distinguished barrister and writer; another, Jean, was invited to speak at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in the United States. A third daughter continued as a missionary educator until the 1920s, and a son became a lawyer and professor.³¹

Both Sorabji and his wife held strong views on their own rich cultural heritage. Though they acknowledged and adopted many Western ways of living, manners, and speech, they opposed the wholesale abandonment of their culture. The method they chose to blend their cultures with their faith was one of education. They brought together Western and Eastern educational methods and materials initially to educate their own children. When they found this approach to be successful, they applied the same methods in schools they started in Poona. In 1876 they founded the Victoria High School, which began with seven children and grew during thirty years to nearly 400 children. In its coeducation of races and of boys and girls it brought Western and Eastern educational methods and materials together.³²

Sorabji and his wife founded and ran three successful missionary schools in Poona, where they allowed the liberating message of the Gospel to transcend culture and to transform and renew old customs and traditions without necessarily destroying them. Franscina was the main force behind these schools and campaigned relentlessly in Britain and India to raise funds. Most of her daughters worked at one time or other in these schools, and indeed one took over from her after her death and continued the work until the 1920s.

Hormazdji Pestonji. Born in 1820, Pestonji was part of the first group of Parsis to present themselves for baptism, in 1839. These baptisms provoked a great uproar within the Parsi community and led to a great deal of persecution, perhaps more for Pestonji than the others, for he was married with a baby daughter at the time. His wife and daughter were taken away from him by the family, and his wife was given in marriage to another man. After many years of legal struggle, he was reunited with his daughter, who later went on to marry a prominent Indian pastor. His unconventional and rather controversial lifestyle did not endear him to the contemporary missionary writers, which perhaps explains the dearth of material about him, compared with the information available on Nauroji or Sorabji. According to Elizabeth Hewat, Pestonji was the first Indian ordained in Bombay.³³ His talents lay in linguistics, and he worked on the translation of the New Testament into Gujarati at Wilson College, Bombay. He then served for a few years with the Irish Presbyterian Mission in Kathiawar.

When Pestonji was posted to Jambusar, however, he refused to go. He left India to write a pamphlet highly critical of the conduct of missionaries toward native ministry. The controversy that this response caused culminated in a settlement that enabled the mission to destroy all copies of the pamphlet. Meanwhile,

After his baptism, Sorabji became dependent on the missionaries financially.

Pestonji married a German woman, they moved to London, and he served twelve years at King's College as professor of Gujarati. He joined the Baptists there and eventually was sent by the Baptist Missionary Society to Poona, where he conducted a relatively successful mission until his death at age seventy-one.

Ruttonji Nowroji. Nowroji came to Christianity through the influence of Pundit Nehemiah Goreh and Sorabji. He was baptized in 1856 by Sorabji and William Price of Nasik amid great commotion and personal persecution, one result of which was his forced permanent separation from his wife and child. He was given work and protection by the Anglican missionaries in Nasik and Bombay and was eventually ordained by Bishop Douglas Harding of Bombay in 1870. Thereafter Nowroji spent thirty years as a missionary in Aurangabad building up the church among the very poor and low caste of that region, with over 2,000 baptisms during this period; however, none were Parsis. He was invited to England in 1893 and gave a series of successful lectures on his work in India to audiences in London. He was one of the founding members of the Parsi Christian Association and did some translation work helping to revise the Gujarati Bible. He died in 1910 at age seventy-two, leaving seven daughters.

Rostamji Mistry. Mistry's name first appears in 1893 in reports from Poona Divinity School, where he was studying. He was involved in a controversy with the European students, who objected to his receiving privileges equal to theirs. Shortly thereafter he left to work as an evangelist among the Parsis in Bombay and later was joined by Freeman. They worked together until 1900, when Freeman died. Through their activities a number of Parsis were baptized and the Parsi Christian Association was formed. When Freeman died, however, the CMS did not replace him. Mistry soon resigned, and the mission to Parsis ended.

Changing Approaches to Zoroastrian Culture

This historical sketch of missions to the Zoroastrians has mentioned two missionaries each of whom was remarkable in his own way—John Wilson, who came to Bombay in 1830, and James Moulton, who arrived for a brief mission in 1915. In between these two dates we have traced the life histories of some of the Parsi converts to Christianity who were also remarkable people in terms of their contribution to church life in India. We have also traced the story of their struggles with the challenges they faced following conversion.

The challenge to Christians who seek to bring Zoroastrians to Christ and, even more so, to the Zoroastrians who have

accepted Christianity is how to reconcile Zoroastrian culture with Christian faith. Wilson's answer was to totally reject Parsi religion and culture. Since the first wave of conversions took place mainly under his influence, the converts' early attitude naturally reflected that of Wilson. Wilson's approach, coupled with his lack of knowledge of the Gathas, led him to dismiss Zoroaster and his religion as unworthy of any attention and to accuse the Parsis of practicing polytheism. He even went so far as to label Zoroaster an impostor.³⁴

A different approach to this challenge appeared nearly a century later in the work of Moulton. Building on the contributions of J. N. Farquhar and others, and basing his understanding of Zoroastrianism on the Gathas, Moulton accepted Zoroaster as a prophet from God and his teachings as containing truths that lack only fulfillment by Christ.³⁵ Moulton's conclusion was thus that Parsis need not reject their culture but must seek its fulfillment and transformation, which only Christ can do. The writings of these two authors demonstrate clearly how missionary attitudes and approaches had changed during the course of nearly a century.

To discover the answer of the converts to this challenge, we examined brief accounts of several of them. We saw that, under the influence of Wilson, the converts initially rejected the Parsi culture. As time passed, however, it became clear that the con-

verts were unable and unwilling to distance themselves from their cultural background. The outworking of their newly acquired faith within their Zoroastrian/Parsi culture is demonstrated clearly by the family life of the Sorabjis, most clearly in their innovative blend of Western and Eastern educational methods at home and later in their missionary schools. Nauroji's life also demonstrates how, during his long life, he was able to accept much of the Parsi culture and be accepted by the Parsi community but yet retain his faith and contribute actively to church life.

The picture that emerges from this review is that Zoroastrian Christians, few though they were, showed themselves stalwart believers who stuck to their faith and gave all for their Lord. Ultimately, however, they saw no reason to give up their rich heritage and embrace another culture. Early missionaries, in contrast, unconsciously assumed that once people from other religions converted to Christianity, they would adopt a Western form of Christianity. The missionaries often looked with suspicion on Christian expressions that contained elements from other cultures. It seems, therefore, that the real struggle the Parsis had after accepting Christ was less with their personal faith and convictions and more with the cultural baggage that both the missionaries and the Parsis carried. The struggle, in other words, was primarily cultural, not religious. The case histories of converts show that they were tackling these issues in their day-to-

day lives and finding solutions, and doing so long before either Farquhar or Moulton were able to articulate them in theological terms.

Western culture was not the sole source of conflict in this cultural struggle, for Parsi culture in its own way was also a hindrance. Parsis exhibited undue reverence for fire, ancestors, nature, and angels, and they laid undue importance on ceremonies, purity rites, and repetitive prayers or mantras. Evidence uncovered during the course of this research but not mentioned in this article shows that the Parsi religion underwent quite a considerable reformation during this same period.³⁶ It is difficult to say how much was due to the influence of the missionaries and the converts and how much was due to secular pressures, but the missionaries and the converts undoubtedly had some part in the process.

Reflections

In this article we have considered the lives of some converts who were from a different culture, place, and time than ours. Issues of culture, however, are especially prominent even to this day. Right at the beginning, when Jesus commissioned his disciples to take the Gospel to all nations, it was inevitable that they would encounter such cultural issues. Thus when Peter and Paul took

the Gospel to the Gentiles, they encountered fierce opposition from some Jewish Christians who wanted the converts to follow Jewish culture and traditions. Yet, led by the Spirit, the apostles trusted in the transforming power of the Gospel to work within the lives of the new Christians in their own cultural setting rather than imposing a foreign one upon them. The consequences of this type of transformation cannot be predicted, and it often takes a long time to bear fruit.

This study illustrates the process of transformation in a tightly knit community of Parsis in nineteenth-century Bombay. The community needed a Wilson to shake it out of its long slumber. It also needed righteous indignation within its members for them to take a fresh look at their own religion. The converts were essential in that they kept faith with their culture

but allowed the Gospel to do its transforming work. Then the community needed an academic such as Moulton to reflect on the outworking of the Gospel within the lives of the converts and the effect of the missionary attacks on the Parsi community, and then to express these insights in theological terms in his writing.

The Parsis had allowed themselves to become captives of their tradition and culture at the expense of the essential message in their Zoroastrian faith. In a similar vein Martin Luther in his time spoke of "the Babylonian captivity of the church"; in our day Lesslie Newbigin described the present Western church as being the captive of its own culture.³⁷ Perhaps a Wilson or Luther from the non-Western world is needed to shake the Western church out of its slumber and allow it to be transformed by the power of the Gospel.

Notes

- David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2d ed. (Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 1:360, 4. By the year 2000, Zoroastrians numbered slightly over 200,000 in India and 2.5 million worldwide.
- Robin E. Waterfield, *Christians in Persia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), gives a good account of missions to various religious communities of Persia.
- The source materials in this study were obtained from published and archival materials from various missionary societies. Most of the names and life histories of the converts were obtained from letters and reports they sent to their home missionary societies. Particularly good sources, where these exist, are the baptismal and ordination testimonies that each person wrote.
- Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1984), gives the most up-to-date materials on Zoroastrianism.
- M. Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, 2d ed. (London, 1884).
- Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).
- John Wilson, *The Parsi Religion as contained in Zend-Avesta and propounded and defended by the Zoroastrians of India, unfolded, refuted, and contrasted with Christianity* (Bombay: American Mission Press, 1843).
- John Holmes, *Historical Sketches of the Missions of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, from their Commencement to the year 1817* (London, 1827). The section on failed missions gives an account of the mission to the Gebri.
- Carapet Aratoon, "To W. Ward in Serampore from Bombay," Oxford, Regent College, Baptist Missionary Archives, 1810–16.
- George Smith, *The Life of John Wilson* (London: John Murray, 1879).
- "Report of the Proceedings of the Scottish Missionary Society," *Scottish Missionary Register*, 1822. Karl Gottlieb Pfander had used this technique among the Muslims in Persia.
- Church Missionary Society, *Extracts from the Annual Letters of the Missionaries for Year 1895–96* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1896), p. 169.
- Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 3 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), p. 758.
- C. D. Snell, "The Student Voluntary Missionary Union," *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1895, pp. 354–60.
- James Hope Moulton, *The Treasure of the Magi: A Study of Modern Zoroastrianism* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1917). The foreword by J. N. Farquhar gives a full account of this commission.
- The discussion of converts focuses mainly on Dhanjibhai Nauroji and Sorabji Khersedji. Their own writings and the writings of others about them have been used as sources for this discussion. Some original letters and reports written by both Nauroji and Sorabji, kept in archives of their respective missionary societies, have been useful in giving insight into their lives. Finally, a number of missionary
- historians mention them, including Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*; Stephen Neill, *History of Christianity in India, 1707–1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985); Elizabeth Hewat, *Christ and Western India: A Study of the Growth of the Indian Church in Bombay City from 1813*, 2d ed. (Bombay: J. Kellock, Wilson College, 1953); idem, *Vision and Achievement, 1796–1956: A History of the Foreign Missions of the Churches United in the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960); J. Murray Mitchell, *In Western India: Recollections of My Early Missionary Life* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1899); Julius Richter, *A History of Missions in India* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1908); and S. Sathianadhan, *Sketches of Indian Christians* (London: Christian Literature Society for India, 1896).
- Dhanjibhai Nauroji, *From Zoroaster to Christ: An Autobiographical Sketch of the Rev. Dhanjibhai Nauroji, the First Modern Convert to Christianity from the Zoroastrian Religion* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1909).
- Smith, *Life of John Wilson*. Wilson contemplated publication of a translation into Gujarati of his book on Parsi religion, which he proposed that Nauroji should prepare for lithographic printing in Edinburgh. There is no evidence that this task was ever actually carried out.
- Neill, *History of Christianity in India*, pp. 401–2. Nauroji, who had the full support of Wilson in this matter, became one of the first Indian ministers employed by the Free Church of Scotland and sent to India as a missionary on a par with the European missionaries. This step set a precedent, which was to be of greatest significance for the church at a later date.
- Wilson had founded this indigenous church in the 1830s.
- J. Murray Mitchell, on behalf of the Church of Scotland Missionary Committee, to Dhanjibhai Nauroji regarding the congregation at Poona, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Special Collections 23 Nov. 1876. At some period during the 1870s Nauroji seems to have overseen the native congregation in Poona as well.
- Dhanjibhai Nauroji, *The Work of Faith: A Sermon Preached in the Bombay Free Church Esplanade, on the 19th Dec. 1875, on Behalf of the Free Church Mission of This City: Containing a Brief Sketch of the Missionary Career of the Late Rev. John Wilson D.D., Father and Founder of the Mission* (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1876), p. 13; *Life and Death in Christ: A Discourse Preached before the Native Congregation of the Free Church of Scotland's Mission, Bombay, on the Occasion of the Death of Mrs. Isabella Wilson* (Byculla: Education Society's Press, 1867).
- William Walker, *Glimpse of Mission Work and Some Mission Schools in Western India* (London: S. Harris, 1887). The Parsi Christian Association, which was limited to Bombay, faded away upon Nauroji's death.
- In Nauroji, *From Zoroaster to Christ*, pp. 84–85.
- Parsis of this period were referred to primarily either by family name (as with Nauroji) or by given name (Sorabji). No attempt is made here to achieve a modern consistency in citations.

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26. [Cornelia Sorabji], *"Therefore": An Impression of Sorabji Kharsedji Langrana and His Wife Franscina* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1924), pp. 30–40. A detailed description is given of the various attempts the family made to get Sorabji back. Finally, the family abducted him and set him adrift on a raft in the ocean. He was eventually rescued by Portuguese sailors and brought back to Bombay.
 27. Sorabji Kharsedji to Rev. H. Venn, Secretary, Corresponding Committee Church Missionary Society, 1861, London, Univ. of Birmingham Library, CMS Archives Special Collections, CI 3/046/5 1861.
 28. Sorabji, *"Therefore,"* p. 54.
 29. The Panchayat (from Persian *panch*, "five") was the highest Parsi court, originally composed of five high priests who made the most important decisions regarding the community.
 30. Sorabji, *"Therefore."* According to Cornelia he wrote two books: *Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism* (ca. 1880) and *The Comparison of Zoroastrianism with Christianity* (ca. 1885). I have been unable to locate either volume.
 31. Neill, *History of Christianity in India*, p. 524.
 32. Sorabji, *"Therefore,"* p. 58.
 33. Hewat, *Christ and Western India*, p. 133.
 34. Wilson, *Parsi Religion*, chap. 8.
 35. Moulton, *Treasure of the Magi*, pp. 224–54. See Eric J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy But to Fulfil: The Contribution of J. N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India Before 1914* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1965).
 36. Moulton, *Treasure of the Magi*, pp. 171–93.
 37. Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Missions* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1994).
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